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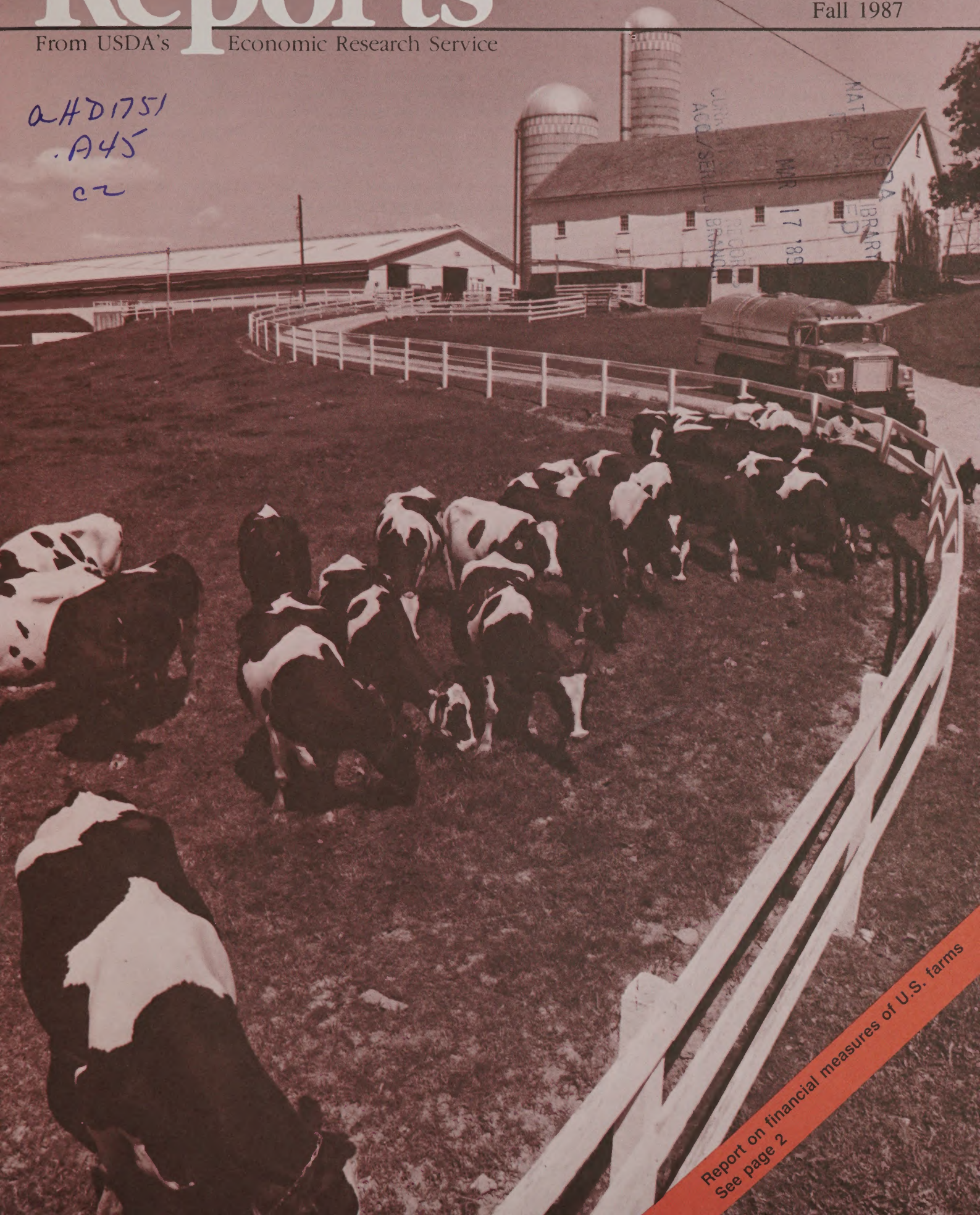
Agriculture • Economics

Reports

From USDA's Economic Research Service

Fall 1987

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Report on financial measures of U.S. farms
See page 2

Introduction

The economics agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture release up-to-date information on the domestic and foreign agricultural situation. Their reports estimate production and stocks, analyze market conditions, and forecast supply and demand. This issue of **Reports** describes publications issued by the Economic Research Service and National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Reports is a free quarterly catalog. To receive this free publication, send your name and address to: Reports, EMS Information-USDA, Rm 237, 1301 New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20005-4788. Or use the order form on the back cover of this issue.

Also included in this issue is a listing of the databases available from ERS. See page 10.

Financial Performance of U.S. Farms

Although 1986 farm income reached all-time highs, the farm sector has not yet escaped financial stress. Commercial farms continue to suffer from eroding land values, but conditions are improving both for them and for the lenders that supply them credit due to lower input costs and higher Government support.

Total farm debt declined by over \$15 billion in 1986, but this was offset by the continued decline in farm asset values. Since peaking in 1982, the nationwide average value of farm real estate has declined 33 percent.

Financial Characteristics of U.S. Farms, January 1, 1987: A Summary summarizes this and other information, the latest available, on the financial performance of farm operators in 1986. For your free copy, write EMS Information-USDA, Rm. 208, 1301 New York Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005-4788. Ask for AIB-526.

More detail is contained in a companion report, "*Financial Characteristics of U.S. Farms, January 1, 1987*," AIB-525, available from the Government Printing Office.



Concise, timely summaries of important issues facing American agriculture help explain the complicated twists and turns of a farm policy decision as it affects producer income, consumer and government expenditures, and agricultural structure. Titles in the issues series include:

- Choices for Implementing the Conservation Reserve
- Assistance to Displaced Farmers
- Economic Growth, Agricultural Trade, and Development Assistance
- New Approaches to Financing Long-Term Farm Debt
- Paying for Marketwide Services in Fluid Milk Markets
- Trade Liberalization in World Farm Markets
- Increased Role for U.S. Farm Export Programs
- Challenges in Designing U.S. Farm Policy
- Effects of Monetary and Fiscal Policy on U.S. Agriculture
- Mandatory Production Controls
- Redistributing U.S. Farm Program Benefits
- The Policy Web Affecting Agriculture

For a free set of papers, write to: Issues, Rm. 237, 1301 New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20005-4788. Include your name, address, and titles of the papers you want.



Specialty Farms

Specialized dairy farms—those with at least 50 percent of their production from dairy products and with at least \$40,000 in total production—fared somewhat better in 1985 than did other U.S. farms. Midsized dairy farms with sales of \$100,000 to \$499,999 were especially sound in that they had the highest net returns on gross revenue and the lowest overall cost ratio. Specialized dairy farms in the North Atlantic region were the most prosperous by several measures: they had the highest returns on gross revenue, the lowest overall cost ratio, and the region had the largest share of farms with positive net returns.

The financial performance of farms varies significantly by type of commodity production. Many important farm commodity policy programs are relevant only to commercial size

farms. USDA's Economic Research Service is publishing a series of bulletins that measures the financial performance of commercial farms which specialize in particular commodities. Such measures include returns to assets, cost/returns ratios, and debt/asset ratios. *Financial Performance of Specialized Dairy Farms*, AIB-519, by Mary Ahearn, Robert Dubman, and Gregory Hanson, is the first in the series; others will examine corn, wheat, and cotton farms. To receive your copy, use the GPO order form on page 13.

ERS Periodicals

Agricultural Outlook. 11 issues per year; averages 48 pages per issue. Subscription \$26.00 domestic; \$32.50 foreign.

USDA's official outlet for farm income and food price forecasts. Emphasizes the short-term outlook, but also presents special long-term analyses of issues ranging from international trade to U.S. land use and availability.

Farmline. 11 issues per year; averages 20 pages per issue. Subscriptions \$14.00 domestic; \$17.50 foreign.

Practical information, covering farm economics in an easily read style, reinforced with charts and statistics, for those without time to review all the technical reports. Covers such issues as production and marketing of farm commodities, world agricultural trade, farm finances, land and water use, productivity, cost and price trends, and farm inputs.

Use the order form below.

ERS Order Form

Order the following periodicals or database catalog (see page 10) directly from ERS using this order form. Make your check or money order payable to ERS Publications and mail to: ERS Publications, Rm. 228, 1301 New York Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005-4788.

ORDER ALL OTHER PUBLICATIONS IN THIS CATALOG FROM GPO.

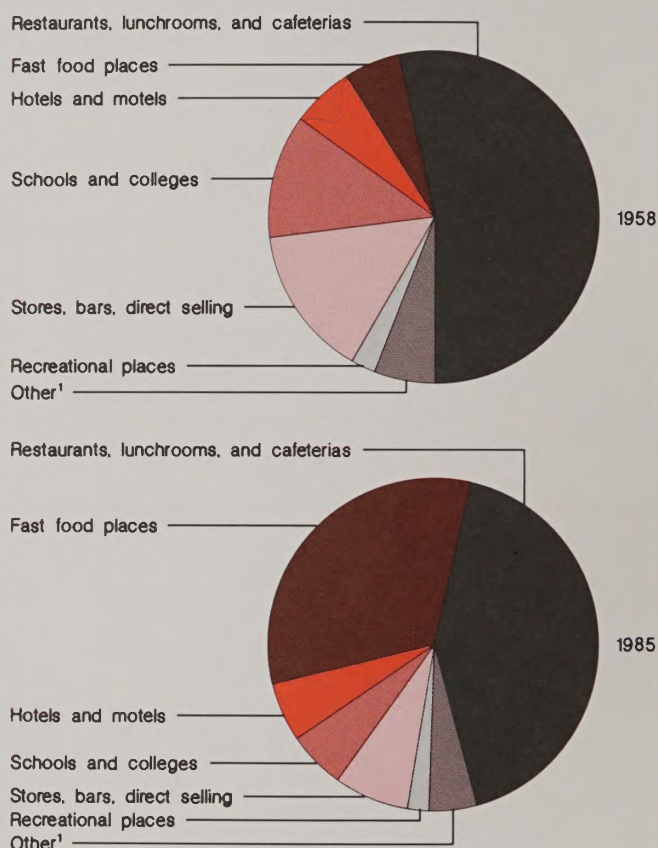
	Issues	Domestic	Foreign
Agricultural Outlook	11	\$26.00	\$32.50
National Food Review	4	9.00	11.25
Farmline	11	14.00	17.50
ERS Database Catalog (FREE)			

Name		
Organization		
Street address		
City	State	Zipcode

National Food Review. Quarterly; averages 40 pages per issue. Subscription \$9.00 domestic; \$11.25 foreign.

Clear, nontechnical accounts of the latest development in food prices, product safety, nutrition programs, consumption patterns, marketing, and production technology. Each issue include discussions of recent developments in Federal legislation affecting foods.

Fast food outlets winning the market share battle

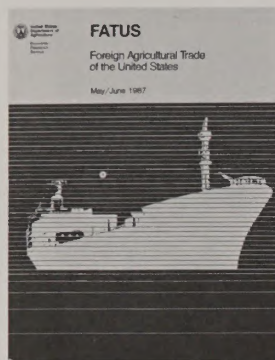


¹Includes military clubs and exchanges, civic clubs and organizations, manufacturing plants, offices, child day care, and dining cars.

This country has more than 700,000 places to eat out, ranging from hot dog vendors at the ball park to school cafeterias. In 1985, these establishments sold \$168 billion worth of meals and snacks (excluding alcoholic beverages). Fast food establishments have been big winners in the market share battle. These restaurants accounted for 32 percent of away-from-home sales in 1985, compared with 5 percent in 1958. At the same time, however, conventional restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias, and other commercial foodservice establishments have seen their share of away-from-home sales decline from 54 percent to 42 percent.

Based on chart from the summer 1987 issue of National Food Review.

ERS Periodicals (from GPO)



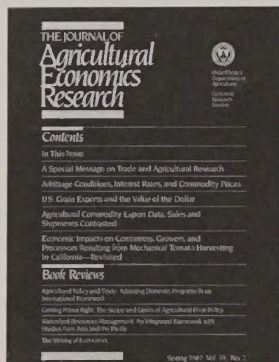
Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States. 6 issues per year; averages 124 pages per issue. Subscription \$21.00 domestic; \$26.25 foreign.

FATUS reports the quantity and value of farm exports and imports, plus price trends. Two annual supplements provide over 500 pages of calendar and fiscal year data.



Economic Indicators of the Farm Sector. A series of 5 annual issues; averages over 100 pages per issue. Subscription \$9.00 domestic; \$11.25 foreign.

A comprehensive update on economic trends in U.S. agriculture. Each issue explores a different aspect of U.S. farms and farm operator income and expenses. Topics include national and State financial summaries, production and efficiency statistics, costs of production, and an annual overview of the farm sector.



The Journal of Agricultural Economics Research. Quarterly journal; averages 52 pages per issue. Subscription \$5.00 domestic; \$6.25 foreign.

The latest in technical research in agricultural economics, including econometric models and statistics, focusing on methods employed and results of USDA economic research. Includes book reviews of current research in agricultural economics.

Situation and Outlook Reports

Situation and outlook reports provide timely analyses and forecasts of all major agricultural commodities and related topics such as finance, farm inputs, land values, and world and regional developments. Reports dealing with specific commodities focus on production and supply, domestic and foreign demand, and price relationships. A full complement of tabular material and charts keeps readers up to date on all facets of production and marketing. Commodity titles include: **Cotton and Wool, Dairy, Feed, Fruit, Livestock and Poultry, Oil Crops, Rice, Sugar and Sweetener, Tobacco, Vegetable, and Wheat.**

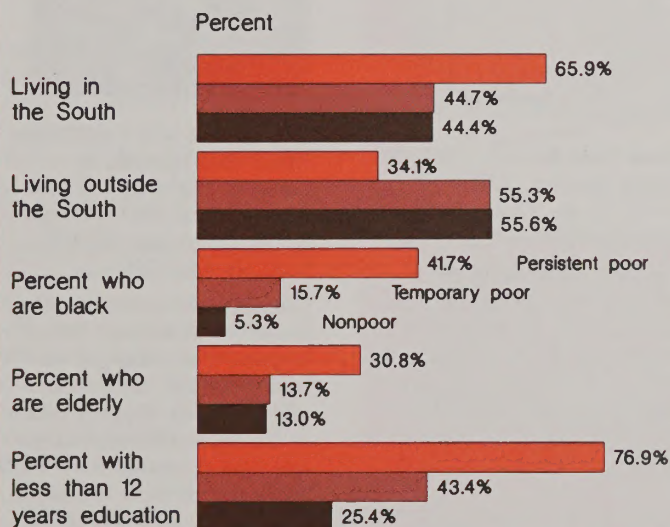
Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Exports analyzes current developments and forecasts U.S. farm exports in coming months by commodity and region.

World Agriculture offers production and use data and analyses by commodity and country, along with a review of recent economic conditions and changes in food and trade policies. **World Agriculture Regional Supplements** provide an indepth look by region at agricultural developments during the previous year and the outlook for the year ahead.

Agricultural Resources examines the developments affecting the current and upcoming demand, supply, and price of major farm production items.

To subscribe to these reports, use the coupon on page 13. For further information on the ERS situation and outlook report program, phone Diane Decker at (202) 786-1494.

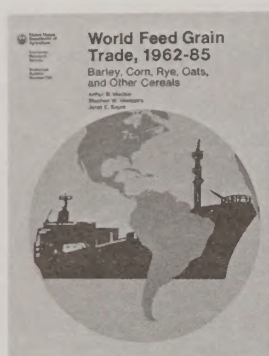
Characteristics show persistent poor are different from the temporary poor and the nonpoor



Rural Development Perspectives. 3 issues per year; averages 44 pages per issue. Subscription \$5.00 domestic; \$6.25 foreign.

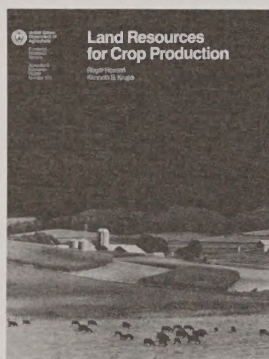
This periodical conveys in a crisp, nontechnical manner the chief results of new rural research and what those results mean for you. Shows the practical application of research in rural banking, aging, and housing, the nonmetro labor force and poverty, and farming policies' impact on rural areas.

Based on a chart from the October 1987 issue of RDP.



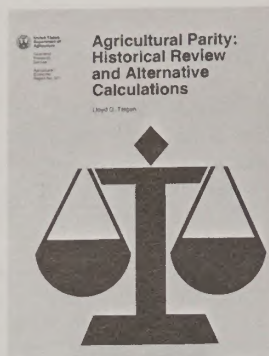
World Feed Grain Trade, 1962-85: Barley, Rye, Oats, and Other Cereals, by Arthur B. Mackie, Stephen W. Hiemstra, and Janet E. Sayre. SB-755. July 1987. 152 pp. \$7.00. Order SN: 001-019-00534-3 from GPO.

Statistics on world trade in feed grains, which more than tripled during 1962-85. Based primarily on world trade data of the United Nations and foreign trade statistics of countries not reporting to the UN.



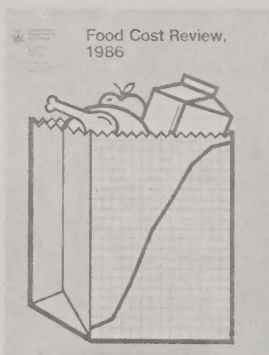
Land Resources for Crop Production, by Roger Hexem and Kenneth S. Krupa. AER-572. July 1987. 32 pp. \$1.50. Order SN: 001-019-00532-7 from GPO.

Examines national and regional land uses developed from the 1982 National Resources Inventory, potential cropland, and some effects on resource use if potential cropland were converted to crop use. About 35 million acres not being cultivated have high potential for crop use and 117 million more have medium potential.



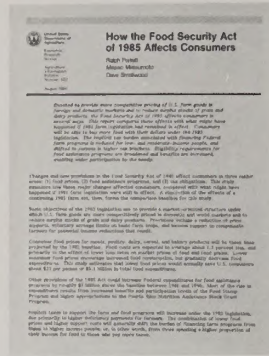
Agricultural Parity: Historical Review and Alternative Calculations, by Lloyd D. Teigen. AER-571. 88 pp. June 1987. \$4.00. Order SN: 001-019-00521-1 from GPO.

Identifies some of the consequences of price and income parity, such as windfalls for some farm groups and below-parity income for others. Makes some recommendations for change such as replacing parity with a marginal social cost equity standard, updating the base period on which parity is based, or modifying how the current parity formula treats interest and taxes.



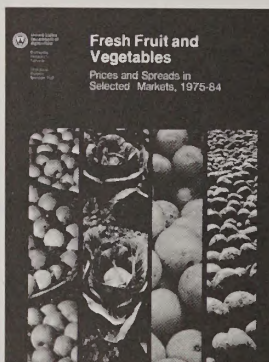
Food Cost Review, 1986, by Denis Dunham. AER-574. July 1987. 56 pp. \$2.75. Order SN: 001-019-00535-1 from GPO.

Presents information on changes in retail food prices and analyzes the impact of farm-to-retail price spreads and related food processing and marketing costs. Retail food prices averaged 3.2 percent higher in 1986 than in 1985.



How the Food Security Act of 1985 Affects Consumers, by Ralph Parlett, Masao Matsumoto, and Dave Smallwood. AIB-527. 12 pp. August 1987. Order SN: 001-019-00536-0 from GPO.

Compares the effects of the Food Security Act of 1985 with what might have happened if 1981 farm legislation were still in effect. Finds that the 1985 act stretches the consumer food dollar, shifts the tax burden of financing farm programs, and enables wider participation in food assistance programs.



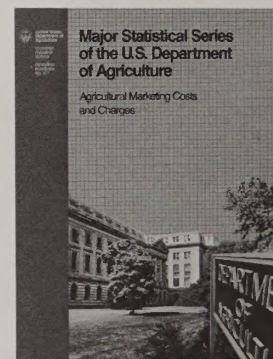
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: Prices and Spreads in Selected Markets, 1975-84. SB-752. June 1987. 200 pp. \$9.50. Order SN: 001-019-00522-0 from GPO.

Contains 180 tables covering monthly and seasonal prices, spreads, costs, and grower-packer returns, retail value, wholesale and shipping point prices, transportation charges, and market spreads for 6 fresh fruits and 10 fresh vegetables sold in four U.S. marketing regions and two cities.



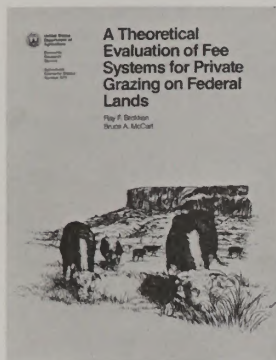
Exporting U.S. Food to Sweden, Norway, and Finland, by Harold A. McNitt. FAER-227. 64 pp. June 1987. \$3.00. Order SN: 001-019-00517-3 from GPO.

Surveys the characteristics of Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish markets for U.S. foods, current consumer trends and preferences, import procedures, the food wholesaling and retailing organization, import restrictions, and receptiveness to specific U.S. foods.



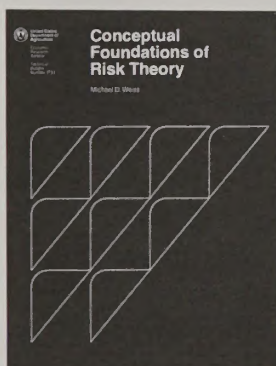
Major Statistical Series of the U.S. Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Marketing Costs and Charges, by Harry H. Harp. AH-671. July 1987. 44 pp. \$2.00. Order SN: 001-019-00523-8 from GPO.

Describes how the market basket, marketing bill, and food marketing cost index are constructed and used to analyze changes in food prices and expenditures. Also identifies the sources of current and historical data on food marketing costs and charges.



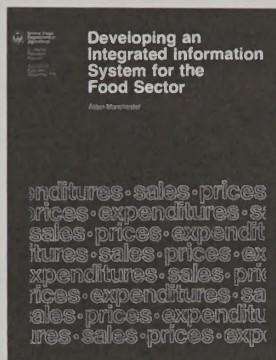
A Theoretical Evaluation of Fee Systems for Private Grazing on Federal Lands, by Ray F. Brokken and Bruce A. McCarl. AER-570. July 1987. 80 pp. \$4.00. Order SN: 001-019-00516-5 from GPO.

Uses a theoretical economic framework to review the allocation and pricing of Federal range forage. Determines that no system satisfies all criteria for allocating rangeland equitably. Best options: maintain current system; switch to competitive bidding; employ a cost-based fee system.



Conceptual Foundations of Risk Theory, by Michael D. Weiss. TB-1731. July 1987. 84 pp. \$4.00. Order SN: 001-019-00530-1 from GPO.

A mathematically rigorous approach to the concept of "risk" as used by agricultural economists. Clarifies and unifies often-used concepts related to risk and provides researchers with an improved methodological framework for applied research on such risk-related topics as crop insurance and price supports.



Developing an Integrated Information System for the Food Sector, by Alden Manchester. AER-575. August 1987. 88 pp. \$4.00. Order SN: 001-019-00524-6 from GPO.

Describes an information system for the food sector which integrates measures of prices, quantities, and expenditures to provide the most accurate estimates of food consumption.

Forecasting Livestock Prices: Fixed and Stochastic Coefficients Estimation, by Roger K. Conway, Charles B. Hallahan, Richard P. Stillman, and Paul T. Prentice. TB-1725. 36 pp. May 1987. \$1.75. Order SN: 001-019-00504-1 from GPO.

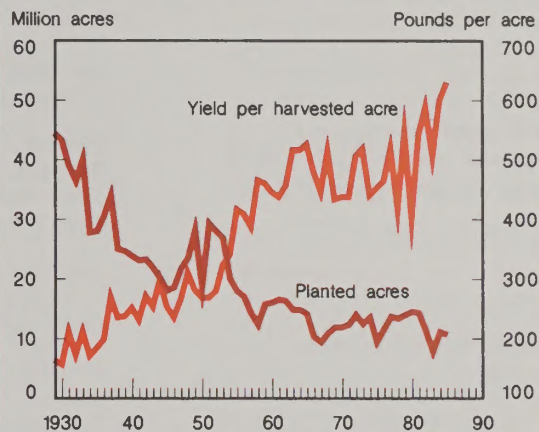
Finds that Cochrane-Orcutt and maximum-likelihood procedures appear better than a fixed coefficients model at forecasting the quarterly retail price for beef and chicken.

Food Spending in American Households, 1982-84, by David M. Smallwood, James R. Blaylock, and J. Michael Harris. SB-753. July 1987. 208 pp. \$9.50. Order SN: 001-019-00531-9 from GPO.

Presents information on weekly food expenditures per person and the percentage of households that purchased specific food items during a week. Average weekly total food expenditures rose from \$21.55 per person in 1982 to \$22.55 in 1984.

Two new industry reports

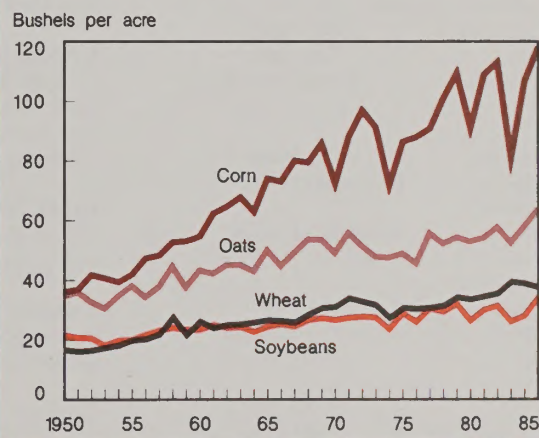
U.S. cotton acreage falls as yields rise



The U.S. Cotton Industry, by Irving R. Starbird, Edward H. Glade, Jr., W.C. McArthur, Fred T. Cooke, Jr., and Terry Townsend. AER-567. 182 pp. June 1987. \$3.75. Order SN: 001-019-00501-7 from GPO.

A single source of economic and statistical information on cotton. U.S. farmers produced about 17 percent of the world's cotton in 1985, down from about 31 percent in 1960, while cotton's share of the world textile fiber market dropped from nearly 70 percent to about 50 percent during the same period.

Yields per acre rise



The U.S. Oats Industry, by Linwood A. Hoffman and Janet Livezey. AER-573. July 1987. 116 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00526-2 from GPO.

Describes the U.S. oats industry from producers to consumers and provides a single source of economic and statistical information on oats. U.S. farmers produced about 16 percent of the total world oats production during 1980-85, down from more than 29 percent during 1960-64 when the United States was the largest producer.

Charts based on information presented in the above reports.

Dialing Up Economic Information

Need data on today's agriculture? The economists, statisticians, and other specialists of the Economic Research Service and National Agricultural Statistics Service may be able to help. Generally, those listed with an "S" for "Statistics" can give you acreage, yield, production, and stocks data. Those identified with an "E" for "Economics" can help with supply-demand-price questions and other economic issues. All phone nos. are for area code 202.

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Fall 1987

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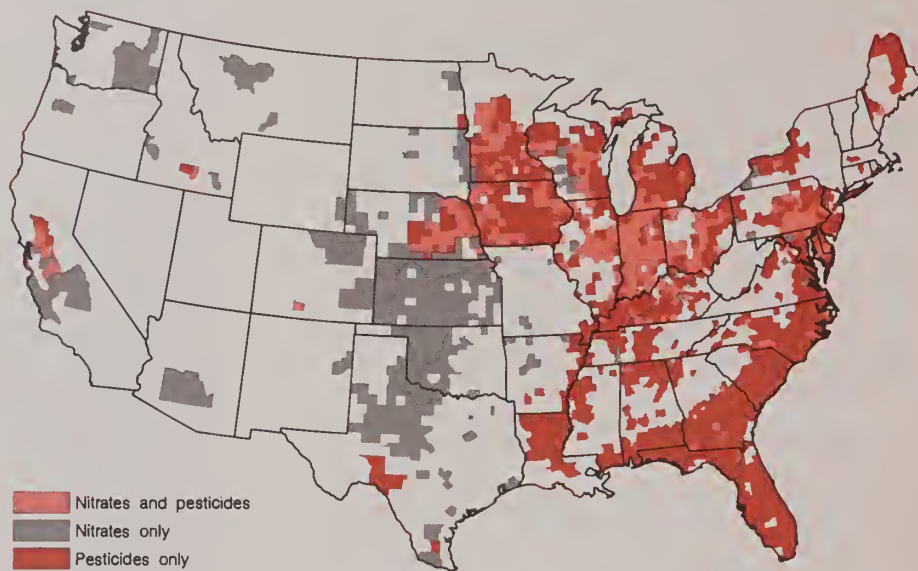


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